

*Oral Questions*

• (1120)

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, the minister should know and should remember that Canadians are entitled to equal access to high quality medical care, no matter where they live in this country.

The minister should know that the cuts in payments to the provinces for health care will undermine the principles of the Canada Health Act, an act passed by this House to prevent the erosion of our national health care system, an act which was supported by the minister's party.

The minister is risking a return to user fees and extra billing. Why is the minister not listening to the provincial governments who are saying that the minister is responsible for the mismanagement of our national economy. They are saying to him: "Physician, health thyself".

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is getting very poetic today. He should also look at this from the perspective of the amount of money that we are transferring to the provinces. Some \$34 billion will be transferred to the provinces this coming year. That will rise at a rate of 3 per cent over-all for the provinces. That 3 per cent is the same increase in federal government program spending. We are not asking the provinces to do anything more than we are doing for ourselves for our own spending.

The Leader of the Opposition raises the question of the Canada Health Act. That received all-party support in this House. The position of this party has not changed since then. I do not know why he puts that red herring on the table.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, here is what Marc-Yvan Côté, the Quebec Minister of Health and Social Services, thinks of the Minister of Finance and his Budget, and I quote:

When Michael Wilson claims that his carelessness will not affect health services in Quebec, he sounds more like a guy living on Bay Street than in Quebec.

Madam Speaker, why does the Minister refuse to admit that Marc-Yvan Côté is right when he says that this Budget will have a devastating impact on health services both in Quebec and the rest of Canada?

[*English*]

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition can pull quotes out of the air. I can also pull quotes out of the air, quotes that have been made by people in recent days saying that what we are asking of the provinces is fair.

**Mr. Gray (Windsor West):** You don't care what Quebec thinks.

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** The hon. member says I don't care. I do care. That is why I am so concerned about this particular problem.

I can go back to things the hon. member said in 1979 when he was sitting in that chair over there saying: "Why does the government have such a fixation, a preoccupation with the deficit?"

I will tell you why we have that fixation, that preoccupation. It is because in the next five years under the Liberal government the deficit and the debt got totally out of control. They left us with the mess we have today.

I can see that the Leader of the Opposition is still laughing. He still does not understand the problem of the debt, the problem of the high deficit. He still has his head in the sand.

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### FISHERIES

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre):** Madam Speaker, I have a mystery question for the Deputy Prime Minister.

I want to ask why this government does so little to protect the Canadian fishing industry.

Yesterday we had the Minister for International Trade saying that they had no choice but to accept the west coast fishing decision. Yet we know that the Americans have passed their own legislation called the Magnusson act which gives extensive protection to their processing industry. However, this government has not done the same. It has not introduced legislation. It has not challenged the American law. It has no plans to help the west coast fishing industry.

The mystery question to the Deputy Prime Minister is this. Why is this government always sacrificing Canadian interests on the altar of free trade?